careful finish of many of the products praiseworthy. On the whole, however, the work was inferior and appears to have become more so as the dynasty progressed, especially after the capital was moved to Peking. Ornateness was exaggerated, and in landscapes there was less intimacy with nature than under the Sung. Expert criticism of painting flourished and a well-known encyclopsedia of painting was compiled—possibly an indication that painters were looking backward rather than giving themselves to original production. For this mediocrity the growing stagnation in Buddhism, that faith which had done so much to inspire the greatest of Chinese painting, may be responsible. Certainly, the attention to non-religious subjects indicates that this may have been the case.

However, in architecture, not only does the quantity produced appear to have been very large, but much of the quality was high. The Sling builders and engineers, indeed, displayed an ability which often rose to the level of genius. Many of the bridges, city walls, temples, and pagodas now in existence date from the Ming, and comparatively few ancient monuments of these types antedate it. The Great Wall was largely rebuilt: most of it as we see it to-day dates from the Ming. Numbers of the extant structures are from the Wan Li period, when politically the dynasty was staggering toward its fall, and when decay in skill might have been expected.

Moreover; in some other fields of art the Ming unquestionably registered marked advance. Magnificent pieces of cloisonne were produced. Rugs and carpets appear to have surpassed those of preceding centuries—perhaps because of contacts with that industry in Persia and the Near East. In the

casting of bronze the Ming craftsmen attained great skill, particularly in the Hsiian Te period (1426-1436).

It was especially in ceramics that the Ming excelled. The output was prodigious and both in form and style showed a marked and diversified departure from the Sung. Under the Sung, monochrome prevailed. Under the Ming, polychrome decoration was the rule, and monochrome products, while continuing, were in the minority. White porcelain was decorated with pictorial designs in colors—by glazes, enamels, and underglaze blues and reds. A beautiful cobalt blue carne in, for this could stand the high tern-